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51
JUL

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN

®

CAPILO
46

MFARIANE
BRIAN

image® COMICS PRESENTS:

"FREEFALL"



story

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In Memory of:

JACK ABEL

Spawn #50 Summary:

Cogliostro explains to Al that if he uses any of his powers it could ultimately lead to his being returned to Hell and Cog reveals that he, too, is a Spawn. Meanwhile, Terry is in the hospital recuperating from the accident where Wanda finds out about Terry's secret doctor visits. When test results reveal that Terry has a malignant brain tumor, Granny Blake asks Al to help him. Al's hatred for Terry conflicts with his love for Wanda and his honeymoon promise to keep her happy. After Terry slips into a coma, Al sacrifices his power to restore Terry's health and Wanda's happiness, realizing that Wanda is lost to him forever. The drain of power thrusts Al to Hell's second level. Devoid of a purpose for living, Spawn submits to being attacked by vile creatures whose mission is to drain Spawn of his life sustaining necroplasm. Then suddenly, memories of past injustices provoke Al into a rage and he rises to fight again.

FOR IMAGE COMICS
LARRY MARDER - exec. director

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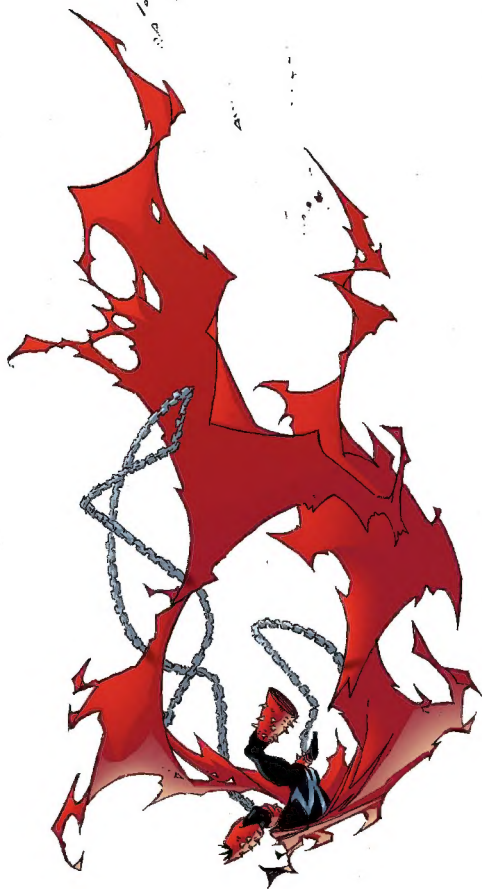
FRAGMENTED INTO A THOUSAND
SECTIONS SPREAD ALL ACROSS THE
NINE LEVELS, THE CATACOMBS OF
HELL OFFER EVERY VARIANT OF
MACABRE SCENERY IMAGINABLE.

THIS IS ONE SUCH SLIVER.

IT HAS BEEN CALLED BY
MANY NAMES, THIS
NIGHTMARE PLACE, AND
YET IT REMAINS
NAMELESS, OWING TO
THE LIMITS OF THE
HUMAN TONGUE,
THE FRAGILITY OF
THE HUMAN MIND.

AND IN SOME
DARK, VILE
CORNER OF
SATAN'S PLAY-
GROUND, THE
DAMNED
WHISPER OF
WHAT IS
POSSIBLY THE
HARSHEST
LEVEL OF ALL:

THE **FOURTH.**



EARTH'S CURRENT
HELLSPAWN IS ABOUT
TO BECOME ITS
NEWEST VICTIM.



HIS MIND
TELLS HIM
HE'S FALLING.



HEADING WHERE?

THE GREAT VOID
ISN'T GIVING ANY
SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE.



AND THAT,
SIMPLY PUT, IS
WHY THIS PLACE
IS FEARED.

HERE, HUMANITY'S
GREATEST SINS
AND ATROCITIES
ARE LAID OUT TO
BE WITNESSED BY
THE UNFORTUNATE
FEW... BEFORE
EVEN THIS BECOMES
MUNDANE. IT'S NOT
WHAT IS SEEN
THAT MAKES THIS
DOMAIN SO
HELLISH--BUT
WHAT IS FELT.



TO WIT:

AL SIMMONS
IS SLAMMED
TO A STARTLING
HALT.

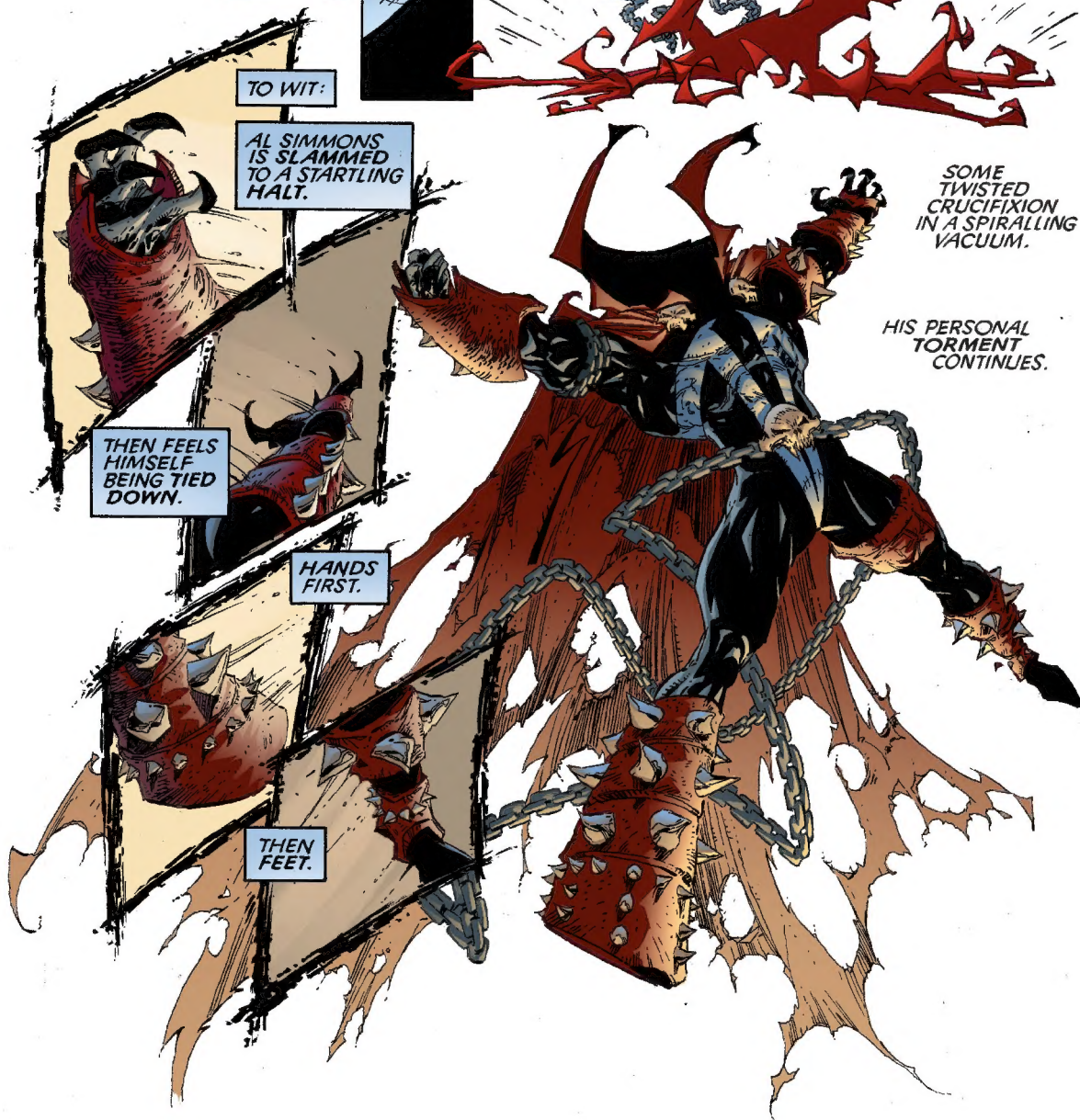
THEN FEELS
HIMSELF
BEING TIED
DOWN.


HANDS
FIRST.

THEN
FEET.

SOME
TWISTED
CRUCIFIXION
IN A SPIRALLING
VACUUM.

HIS PERSONAL
TORMENT
CONTINUES.





STRUGGLE
AS HE MAY,
HIS INVISIBLE
BONDS HOLD
FAST.

WHATEVER HE
HIT-- WHATEVER
PINS HIM-- FEELS
TANGIBLE.
FORMIDABLE.

HIS EYES TELL
HIM OTHERWISE.

WHAT
KIND OF
MADNESS
IS
THIS?

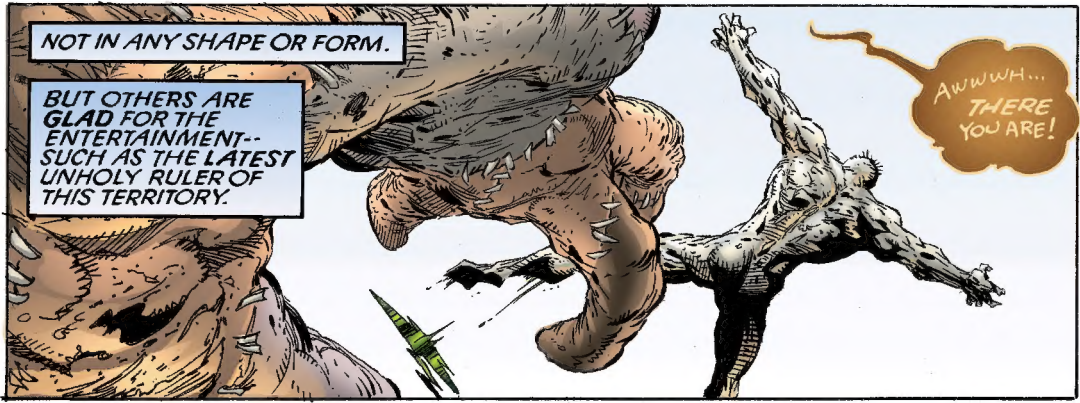
A PRIVATE
ONE. SAVED
EXCLUSIVELY
FOR HIM.

THEN, THE NOISE:
HIS FIRST CLUE.
AND THE SECOND:
PAIN.

IT GROWS
SHARPER AS
THE SYMBIOTIC
COSTUME,
ATTACHED TO
HIS NECROPLASMIC
NERVES, BEGINS
TO PEEL ITSELF
FROM ITS HOST.

DETACHMENT. HE'S
BEEN THROUGH IT ONCE
BEFORE, ON EARTH.

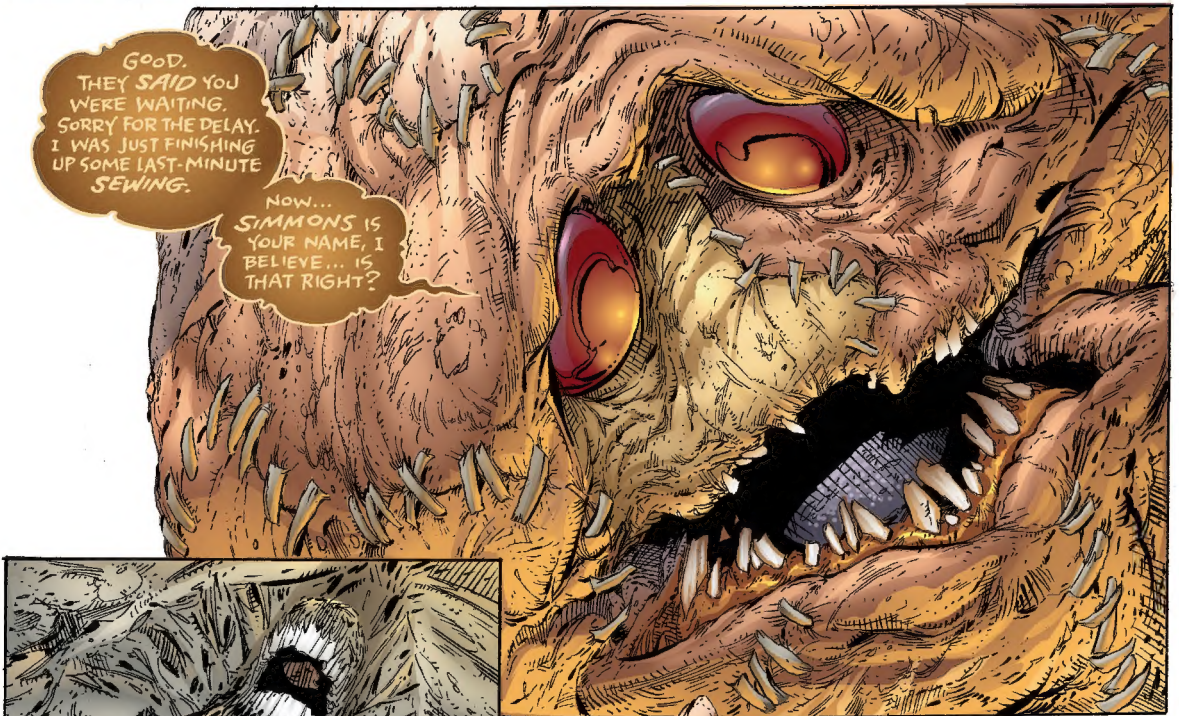
HE PRAYED HE'D
NEVER HAVE TO LIVE
THROUGH THAT AGAIN.
UNFORTUNATELY,
PLEADING FOR GOD'S
MERCY ISN'T
PERMITTED HERE.



NOT IN ANY SHAPE OR FORM.

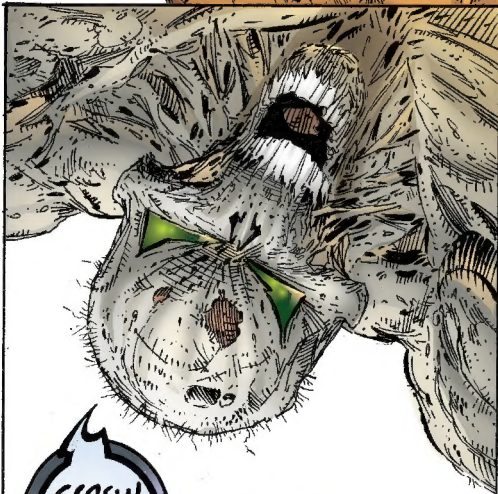
BUT OTHERS ARE GLAD FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT--SUCH AS THE LATEST UNHOLY RULER OF THIS TERRITORY.

AWWWH...
THERE
YOU ARE!



GOOD.
THEY SAID YOU
WERE WAITING.
SORRY FOR THE DELAY.
I WAS JUST FINISHING
UP SOME LAST-MINUTE
SEWING.

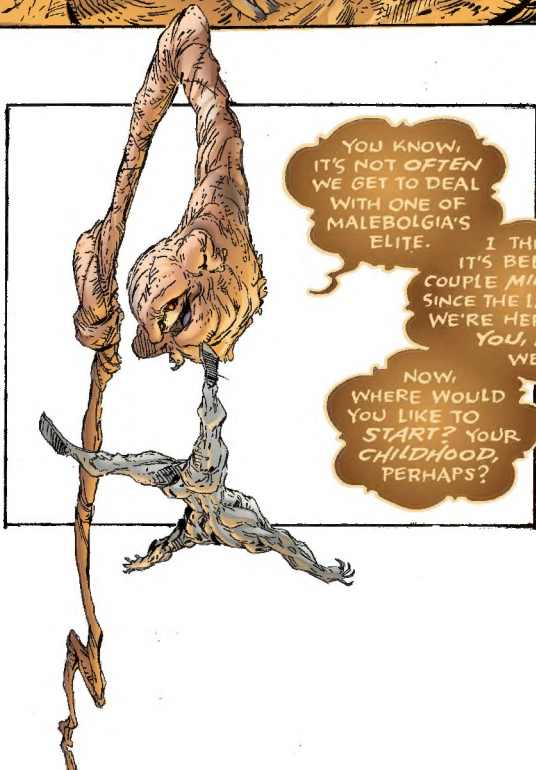
NOW...
SIMMONS IS
YOUR NAME, I
BELIEVE... IS
THAT RIGHT?



SCREW
YOU!

SPIRITED
THAT WAS
ON YOUR
RESUME.

THIS
SHOULD BE
A FUN
SESSION.



YOU KNOW,
IT'S NOT OFTEN
WE GET TO DEAL
WITH ONE OF
MALEBOLGIA'S
ELITE.

I THINK
IT'S BEEN A
COUPLE MILLENNIA
SINCE THE LAST. BUT,
WE'RE HERE FOR
YOU, AREN'T
WE?

NOW,
WHERE WOULD
YOU LIKE TO
START? YOUR
CHILDHOOD,
PERHAPS?



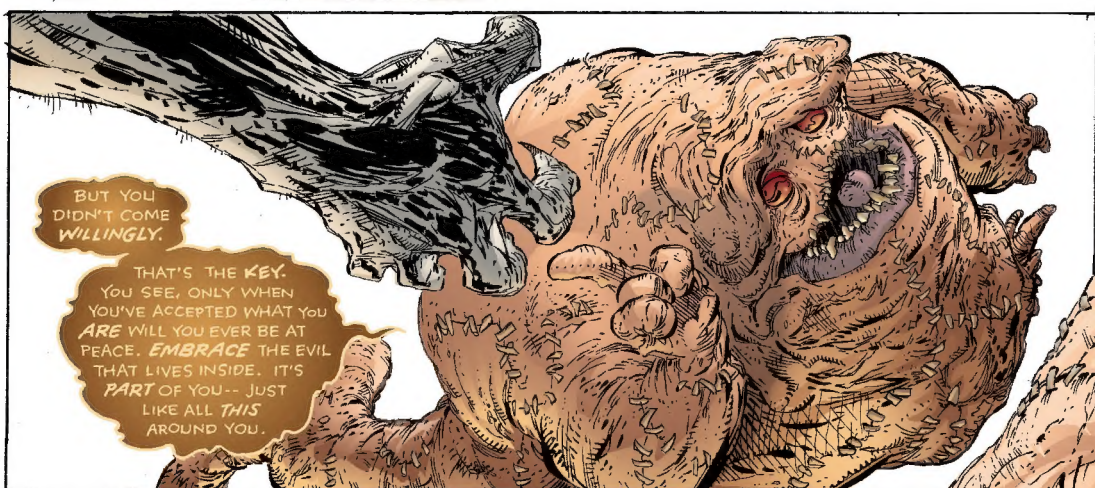
MY
CHILDHOOD?!

YOU'RE RIGHT.
NOTHING TOO DYS-
FUNCTIONAL IN THAT
AREA. IT WAS A GOOD
ENVIRONMENT.

WHAT
DO YOU WANT
FROM ME?

THE SAME
THING YOU WANT.
ANSWERS.

TO WHAT?!!
YOU'VE ALREADY
WON. HELL
HAS ME.



BUT YOU
DIDN'T COME
WILLINGLY.

THAT'S THE KEY.
YOU SEE, ONLY WHEN
YOU'VE ACCEPTED WHAT YOU
ARE WILL YOU EVER BE AT
PEACE. EMBRACE THE EVIL
THAT LIVES INSIDE. IT'S
PART OF YOU-- JUST
LIKE ALL THIS
AROUND YOU.



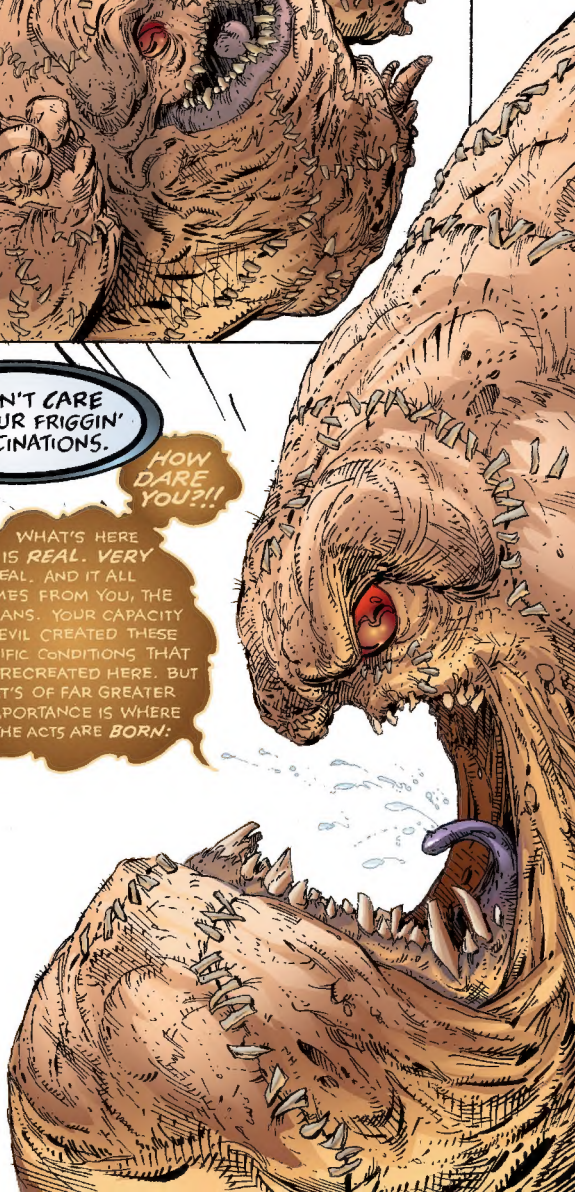
HUH?

I DON'T CARE
ABOUT YOUR FRIGGIN'
HALLUCINATIONS.

HOW
DARE YOU?!!

WHAT'S HERE
IS REAL. VERY
REAL. AND IT ALL
COMES FROM YOU, THE
HUMANS. YOUR CAPACITY
FOR EVIL CREATED THESE
HORRIFIC CONDITIONS THAT
ARE RECREATED HERE. BUT
WHAT'S OF FAR GREATER
IMPORTANCE IS WHERE
THE ACTS ARE BORN:

THE SINS OF
MAN. THEY'RE HERE.
I CAN SEE THEM. A
MUGGING OVER THERE,
SOME RAPING, CHEATING
AND ABUSE IN THAT
CORNER... IT'S QUITE
LOVELY.



IT'S THE
SOUL.

YOU CAN'T
SEE IT, YET IT'S
FELT BY ALL. THAT'S
WHAT THIS PLACE
IS-- A HOLDING
TANK FOR DARK
EMOTIONS.

THE ACTUAL
PHYSICAL STUFF
I LEAVE TO THE OTHER
KINGDOMS. HERE, WE
GET TO THE *CORE* OF
PROBLEMS BY STRIPPING
AWAY ALL THE
BARNACLES.

SO THE
EASY
QUESTION
IS, *WHY*
ARE YOU
HERE?

WANDA.

NOT QUITE.
YES, IT DOES HAVE
SOMETHING TO DO
WITH LOVE, BUT NOT
THE KIND YOU'RE
THINKING OF.

IT'S
DOWN TO
YOUR
LOVE OF
KILLING.

YOU'RE
WRONG.

REALLY?

THEN YOUR
MIND'S BEEN
CLOUDED. LET'S
PULL *THAT* LAYER
AWAY AND
RECONSTRUCT A
FEW MOMENTS
FROM YOUR
PAST.

GYAAA



YOUR
FIRST KILL. DO
YOU REMEMBER
HIS FACE?

THAT WAS AN
EASY ONE, WASN'T IT?
BUT AS TIME MOVED ON, THE
HABIT BECAME **ENTRENCHED**.
YOUR DESIRE FOR MAYHEM
DIDN'T NEED MUCH
MOTIVATING.

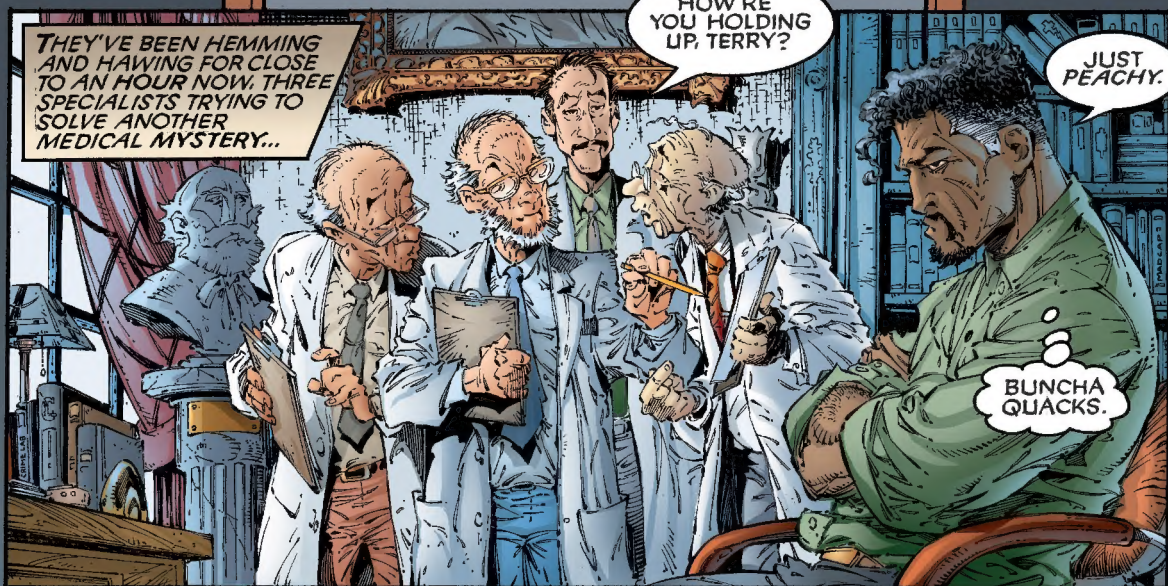
SOON,
INNOCENTS
WERE CAUGHT IN THE
CROSSFIRE. ALL THE WHILE,
YOU FELT **ABSOLOVED**
BECAUSE, AS A GOOD
SOLDIER, YOU WERE
FOLLOWING **ORDERS**.

THEY
DECORATED
YOU MANY
TIMES, FOR
HEROISM.

IT FELT
GOOD,
DIDN'T
IT?

UNFORTUNATELY,
YOU WERE **TOO**
SKILLED. SO, AS
YOUR ASSIGNMENTS
BECAME **BLOODIER**,
YOUR VALUE
INCREASED EXPONEN-
TIALY HERE IN
HELL.

YOUR
SPECIAL KIND
OF **LOVE** IS
VERY RARE
INDEED.



THEY'VE BEEN HEMMING AND HAWING FOR CLOSE TO AN HOUR NOW. THREE SPECIALISTS TRYING TO SOLVE ANOTHER MEDICAL MYSTERY...

HOW'RE YOU HOLDING UP, TERRY?

JUST PEACHY.

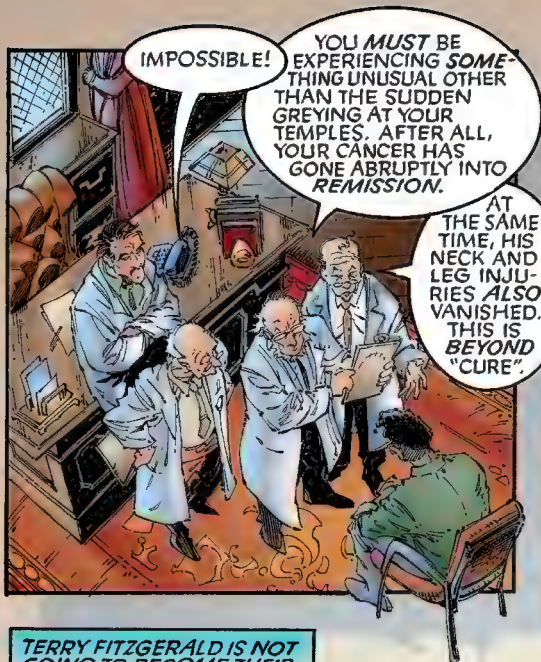
BUNCHA QUACKS.

AN INTERESTING THEORY, DR. ROLLINS, THOUGH IT DOESN'T TAKE INTO ACCOUNT HIS FAIRLY UNREMARKABLE GENETIC MAKEUP.

YES. WELL, SINCE THIS PHENOMENON HAS ONLY BEEN DOCUMENTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S SUPER-HUMANS, PERHAPS OUR PATIENT ISN'T WHAT HE APPEARS.

MY FEELINGS EXACTLY. MUCH AS WE'D LIKE TO QUANTIFY THIS MIRACULOUS RECOVERY, IT'S DIFFICULT TO KNOW HOW TO FRAME THE QUESTIONS. MR. FITZGERALD, ARE YOU CERTAIN THAT ALL THE DATA WE HAVE IS CORRECT?

YUP.

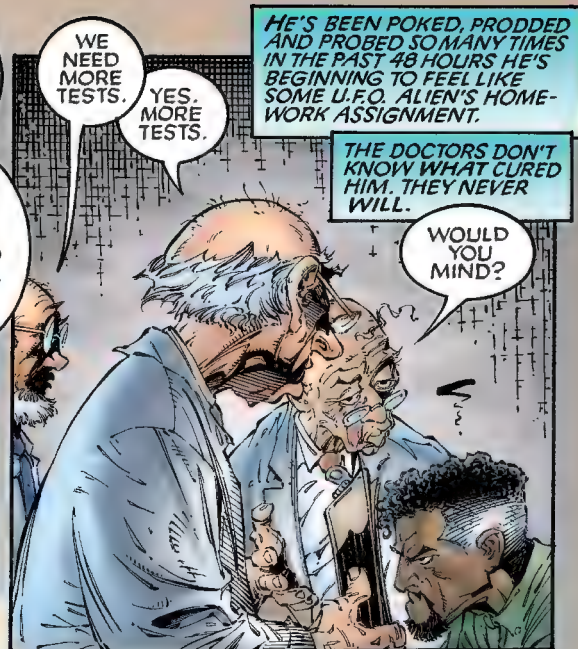


IMPOSSIBLE!

YOU *MUST* BE EXPERIENCING *SOME* THING UNUSUAL OTHER THAN THE SUDDEN GREYING AT YOUR TEMPLES. AFTER ALL, YOUR CANCER HAS GONE ABRUPTLY INTO REMISSION.

AT THE SAME TIME, HIS NECK AND LEG INJURIES *ALSO* VANISHED. THIS IS *BEYOND* "CURE".

TERRY FITZGERALD IS NOT GOING TO BECOME THEIR GUINEA PIG.



WE NEED MORE TESTS.

YES. MORE TESTS.

HE'S BEEN POKED, PRODDED AND PROBED SO MANY TIMES IN THE PAST 48 HOURS HE'S BEGINNING TO FEEL LIKE SOME U.F.O. ALIEN'S HOME-WORK ASSIGNMENT.

THE DOCTORS DON'T KNOW WHAT CURED HIM. THEY NEVER WILL.

WOULD YOU MIND?



LOOK, DOCTORS! I ONLY AGREED TO COME THESE PAST FEW DAYS OUT OF RESPECT FOR DR. BUSCINO. I *THOUGHT* YOU MIGHT HAVE A FEW IDEAS AS TO WHY THIS HAPPENED. BUT YOU *DON'T*.

SO I'M *DONE*. GOD DAY.



A TYPICAL REACTION FROM A PATIENT SUFFERING POST- CONFINEMENT STRESS.

EXACTLY.

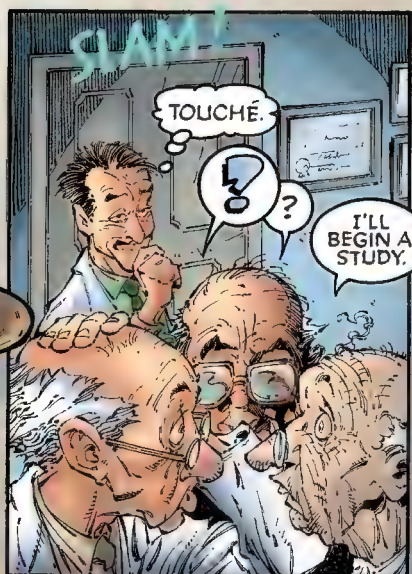
WE'LL AWAIT YOUR CALL AFTER YOU'VE GOTTEN SOME REST.



LOOK, GUYS, LET ME MAKE THIS *CLEAR*. I'M FINISHED HERE. IT'S OVER. I'VE LEFT THE BUILDING.

DENIAL IS A FAIRLY COMMON RESPONSE.

OK, I HAVE ONE QUESTION. DO ALL SPECIALISTS HAVE TO BE OLD, BALD AND NEAR-SIGHTED?

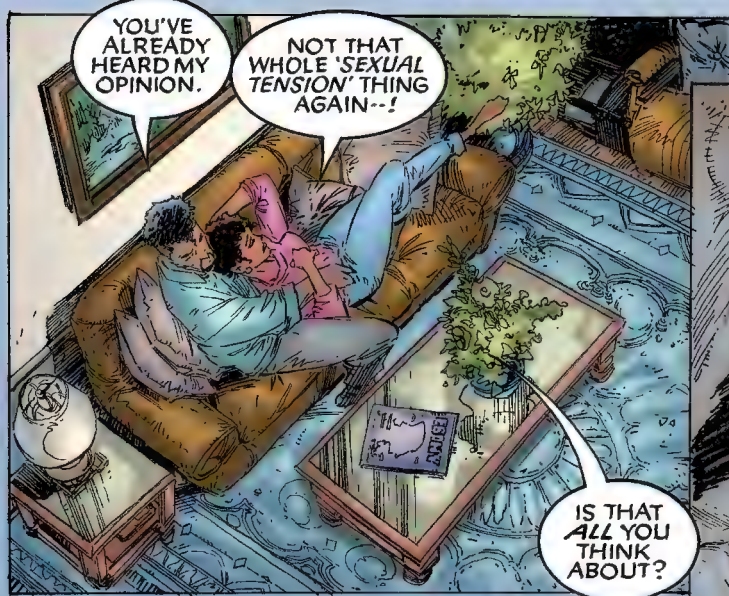
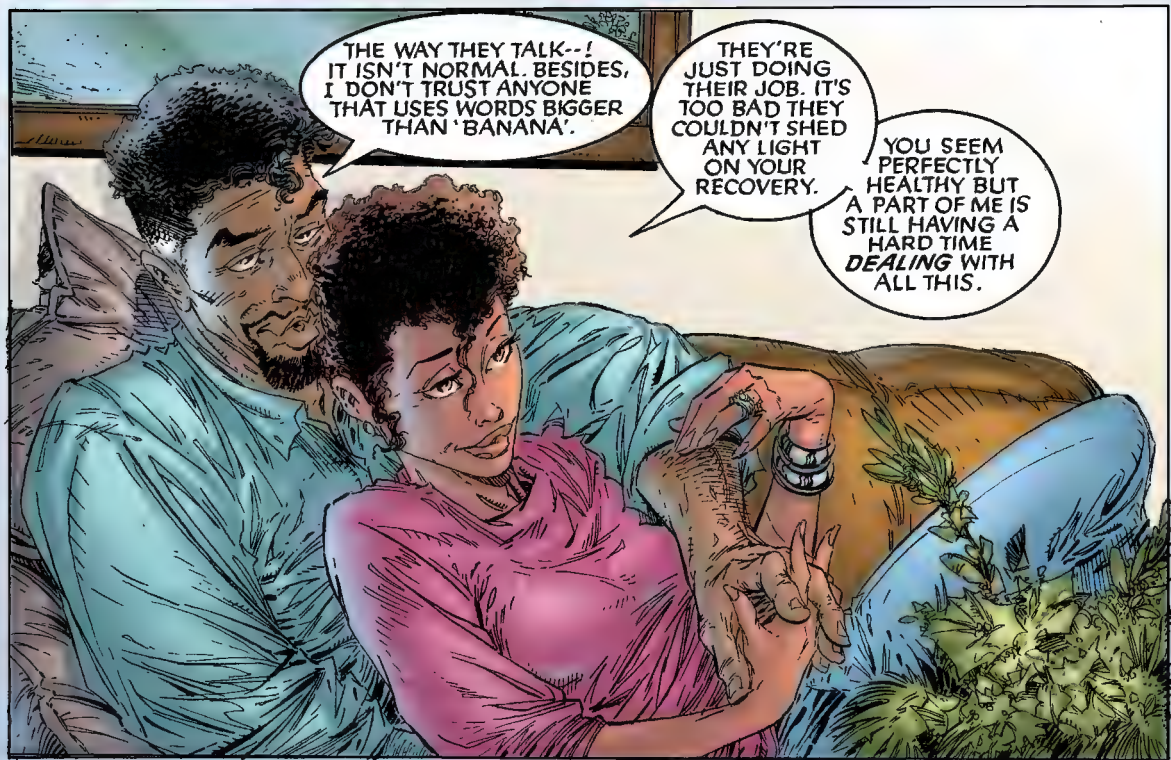
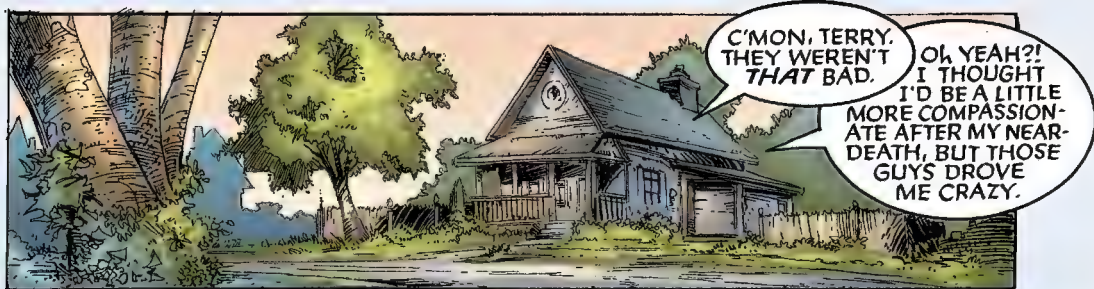


SLAM!

TOUCHÉ.

?

I'LL BEGIN A STUDY.



MAMA!
DADDY!
LOOK!



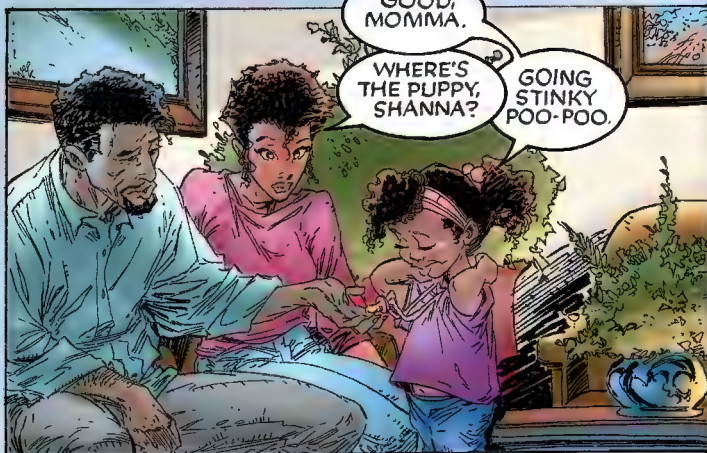
LIKE AN ATOMIC EXPLOSION, SHE ENTERS: CYAN, NAMED AFTER THE PUREST FORM OF BLUE. AS THE BLUE SKY BRINGS LIGHT TO EVERY DAY, SO DOES SHE.

HEY,
SWEETIE,
HOW ARE
YOU?

GOOD,
MOMMA.

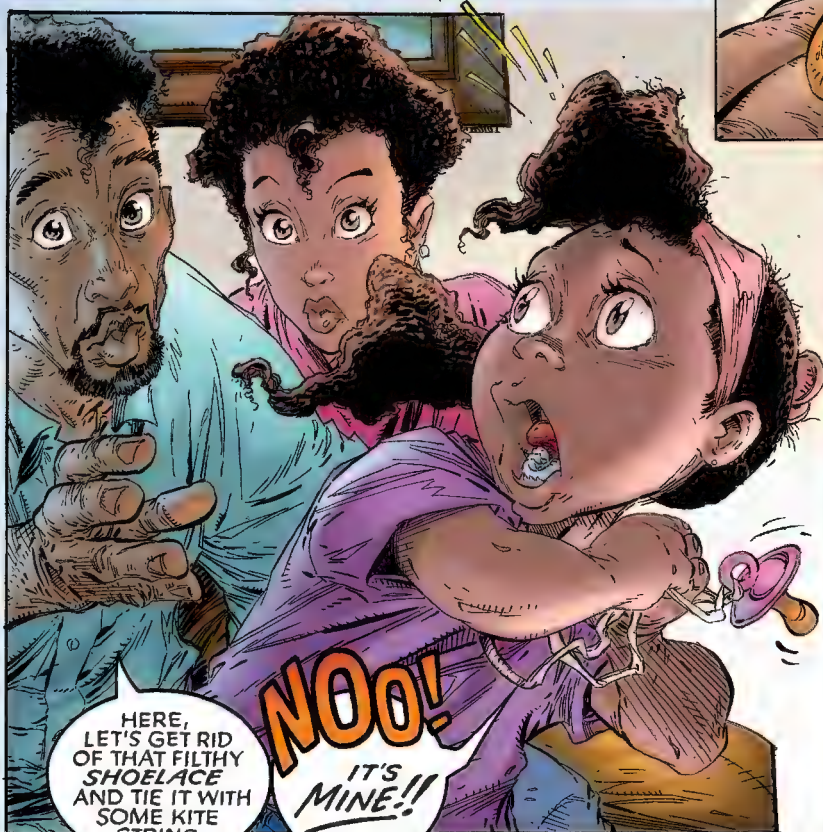
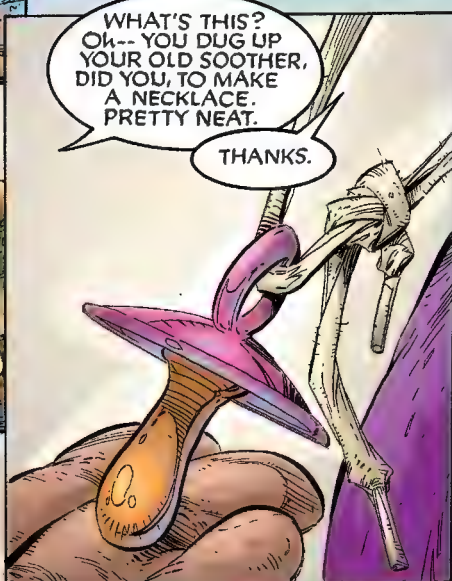
WHERE'S
THE PUPPY,
SHANNA?

GOING
STINKY
POO-POO.



WHAT'S THIS?
Oh-- YOU DUG UP
YOUR OLD SOOTHER,
DID YOU, TO MAKE
A NECKLACE.
PRETTY NEAT.

THANKS.

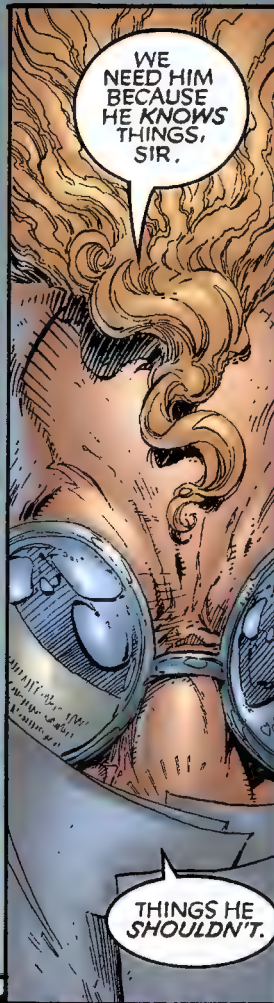


OKAY!
OKAY!
WHERE'D
YOU FIND
THAT, ANY-
WAYS?

AT
HOSPITAL.*

HERE,
LET'S GET RID
OF THAT FILTHY
SHOELACE
AND TIE IT WITH
SOME KITE
STRING.

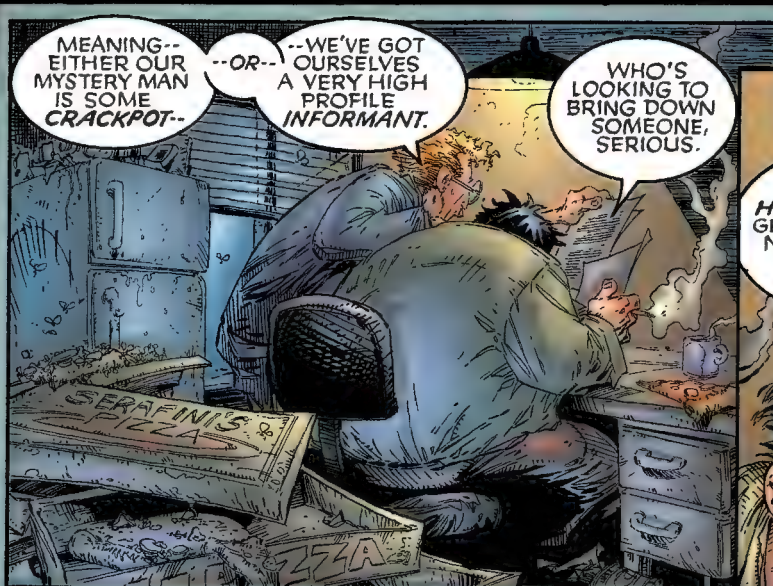
NOO!
IT'S
MINE!!



LOOK HOW IT WORKS THROUGH. CHIEF BANKS BLOWS HIS HEAD OFF. THEN, EVEN THOUGH WE GAVE *PLENTY* OF DAMAGING EVIDENCE TO THE PAPERS, EVERYTHING GETS SWEEPED UNDER THE CARPET, LEAVING BANKS *HANGING* THERE, ALL BY HIMSELF.

SO WHY IS THERE ALSO SUCH A FOCUS ON SENATOR JENNINGS? HE RETIRED *YEARS* AGO. IT SUGGESTS SOMEONE *BIGGER* IS PULLING THE STRINGS... AS WE SUSPECTED.





MEANING-- EITHER OUR MYSTERY MAN IS SOME CRACKPOT--

--OR--

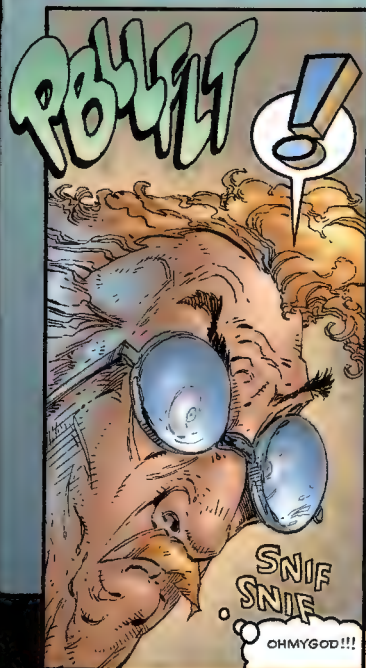
--WE'VE GOT OURSELVES A VERY HIGH PROFILE INFORMANT.

WHO'S LOOKING TO BRING DOWN SOMEONE, SERIOUS.

OKAY, SO WE HANG WITH THIS GUY A LITTLE LONGER. I'M STILL CURIOUS ABOUT HOW HE FOUND US SO QUICKLY.

AND HOW THE HELL DID HE GET OUR PHONE NUMBER THE DAY IT WAS INSTALLED?

WE'LL FIND OUT WEDNESDAY.



POW!



SNIF
SNIF

OHMYGOD!!!



Aw, come on, twitch! It was just a little fart. *sniff* Besides, I kinda like the way it smells.

OHMYGOD!

OHMYGOD!



SNIFFFFF

ahhh...

AIR!!



YOU GONNA LIVE?

I'D APPRECIATE A LITTLE CONSIDERATION NEXT TIME, SIR! EVEN HITLER GAVE A WARNING BEFORE HE ATTACKED!

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS NOTICES SOMETHING THING BELOW.

SIR, GRAB YOUR GUN, NOW!

WHAT IS IT?

A **CAR!**
PARKED AROUND
BACK! IT WASN'T
THERE A FEW
HOURS AGO--!

NOW
WHO
COULD
THAT
BE...?

HEE
HEE

TINK
TINKLE

WE'RE
ABOUT
TO FIND
OUT.

THE **CAR!**

DIDN'T YOU WONDER
WHY I WASN'T
BOTHERED WHEN YOUR
CAR BLEW UP? AND
HOW I DIDN'T BITCH
EVEN ONCE WHEN WE
HAD TO TAKE THOSE
GODFORSAKEN CABS
EVERYWHERE?

SURPRISE!

Uh?

YOU
LIKE
IT?

LIKE
WHAT?

WITH THE PRACTICED CAUTION OF A FIFTEEN-YEAR VET, TWITCH SWEEPS THE ALLEY IN A BEAT...

BAM

... FINDING NO ONE.

WHAT KIND OF IDIOT WOULD PARK THAT AROUND HERE?!

NOPE!

I THOUGHT YOU WERE MATURING.

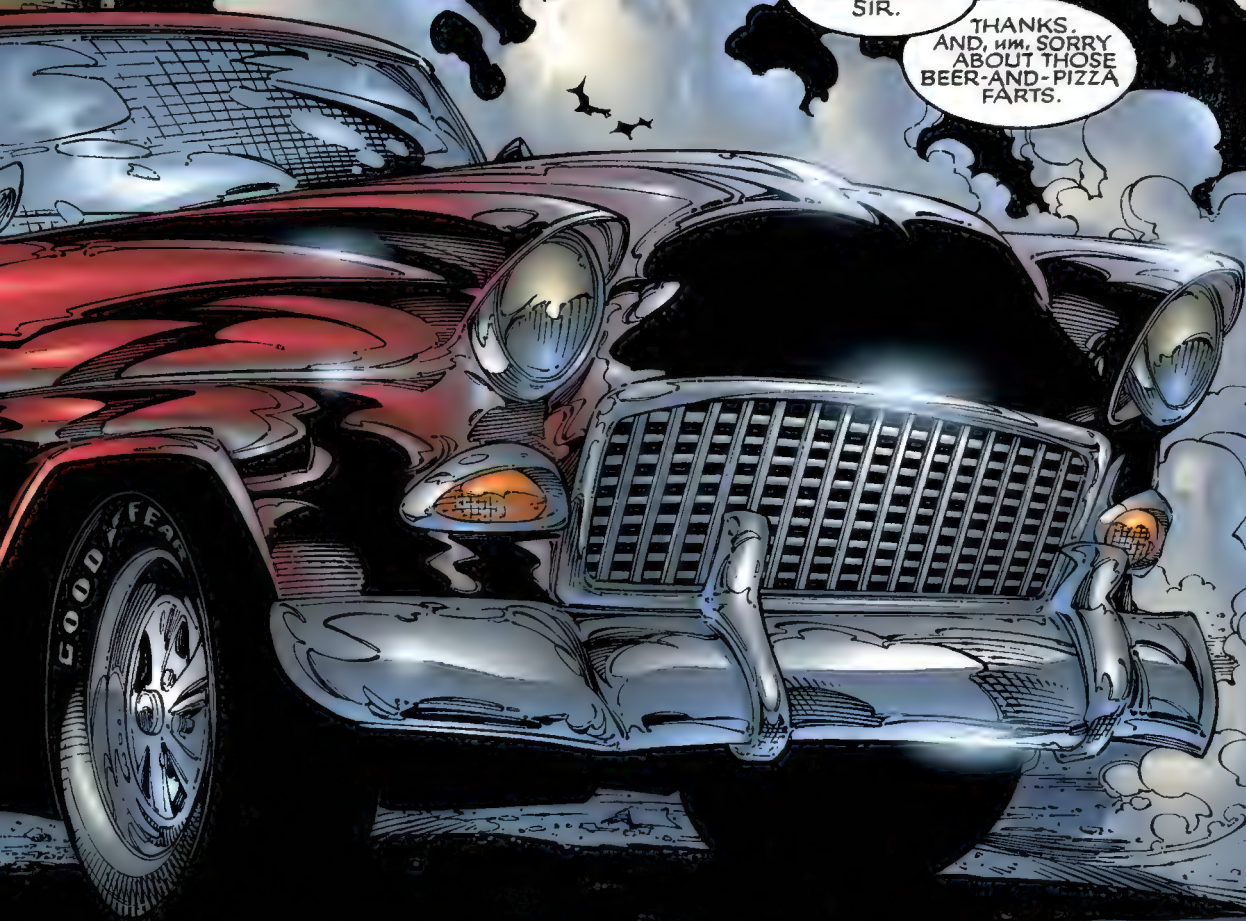
IT WAS 'CAUSE I KNEW THIS WAS COMING. AIN'T IT A BEAUTY? A '55 CHEVY. COMPLETELY REBUILT FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE. I KEPT PART OF MY RESERVE CASH TO GET THIS.

I ALWAYS DREAMED OF ONE OF THESE BABIES, BUT NEVER HAD A GOOD ENOUGH REASON TO BUY ONE UNTIL NOW. IF WE'RE GOING TO BE A LEGITIMATE DETECTIVE AGENCY THEN WE OUGHT TO LOOK THE PART.

I CALL IT *The CRIMEMOBILE*. WHADDAYA THINK?

IT IS IMPRESSIVE, SIR.

THANKS. AND, UM, SORRY ABOUT THOSE BEER-AND-PIZZA FARTS.





TO THE POINT OF
EMERGENCY... IT'S
QUITE... IT'S
BUT I DON'T WANT
HATE... I WANT
BIG... I WANT
BIG... I WANT



JUST... I'M...
SO... I'M...
GOT... I'M...
YOU... I'M...
REST... I'M...
THE... I'M...
YOUR... I'M...
MAY... I'M...
YOUR... I'M...
KOREA

SO... I'M...
CON... I'M...
ANGRY... I'M...
MURDERED

IT'S OUT



SEE DEEP
THAT THEY
THEIR
CATHEDRAL
LET AND
THEIR MARKS

YOU'RE BEING
A HELLFIRE
CAUSE YOU'RE
FIRE, BUT YOU
ARE THE
POTENTIAL

THE
DEATH
WARRIOR

THE
WARRIOR
WARRIOR

THE
WARRIOR
WARRIOR

THE
WARRIOR
WARRIOR

THE
WARRIOR
WARRIOR

THE
WARRIOR
WARRIOR

ALICE

REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME YOU SAW HER...? IT TOOK YOU NEARLY **FOUR DAYS** TO GET UP THE NERVE TO **INTRODUCE** YOURSELF.

AND AFTER ALL THAT, ON YOUR FIRST FEW DATES SHE DIDN'T EVEN SEEM PARTICULARLY **INTERESTED**.

BEFORE LONG, THAT CHANGED. YOUR COURTSHIP, THE GIVE-AND-TAKE, SHOWED THE SYMPATHIES YOU BOTH EMBRACED.

THEN, IN ALMOST NO TIME, A FULL-BLOWN **LOVE** SPROUTED IN YOU BOTH. YOU GOT YOUR WISH, THAT YOU'D SPEND THE REST OF YOUR **LIVES** TOGETHER.

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IT ALL SEEMED SO
PERFECT, DIDN'T IT? SO
WHAT IF YOU COULDN'T
FATHER ANY CHILDREN.
SO **WHAT** IF YOUR SECRET
ASSIGNMENTS TOOK YOU
AWAY FOR WEEKS AT A
TIME? **LOVE** WOULD
CARRY YOU.

YOUR LOVE FOR **BLOOD**.
YOUR LOVE FOR **WANDA**.

THEY EXPANDED SIMULTANEOUSLY.

ONE FOUGHT THE OTHER FOR PRIMACY.
BECAUSE **LOVE**, AL, NEEDS A
CONSTANT FLOW OF **NOURISHMENT**.
SOMETHING HAD TO GIVE.

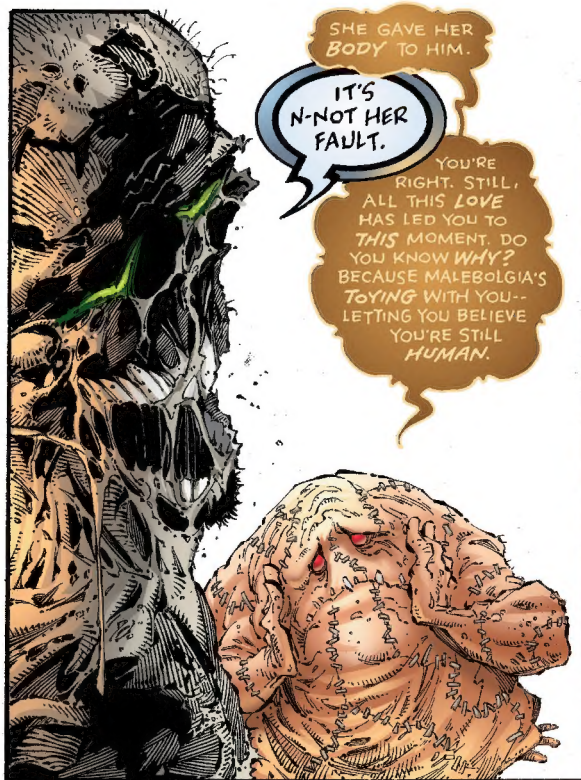
SURPRISE!
IT WAS
You.

AT FIRST,
WANDA MOURNED.
HER HEART
ACHED. A **LOVING**
WIFE GOES
THROUGH THAT.

SHE ALSO **LOVED** YOU SO
MUCH THAT SHE THEN
FOUND COMFORT IN
ANOTHER MAN. YOUR
FRIEND. AND, WELL,
HIS PLUMBING
WORKED. THEIR
DAUGHTER
ALMOST MADE
THEM FORGET
YOU.

WHAT
DID THEY CARE
ABOUT YOU, AFTER
ALL? THEY HAD
EACH OTHER. TO
CHERISH. TO
LUST AFTER.
TO LOVE!

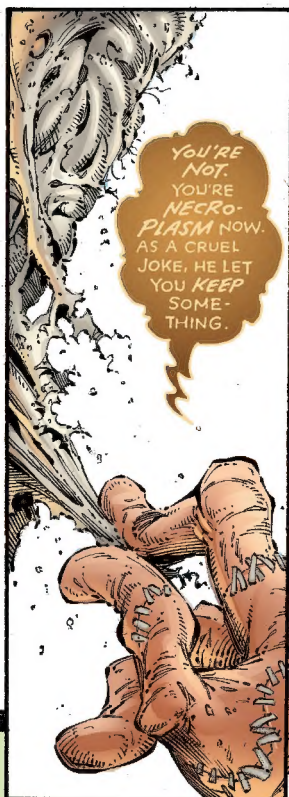




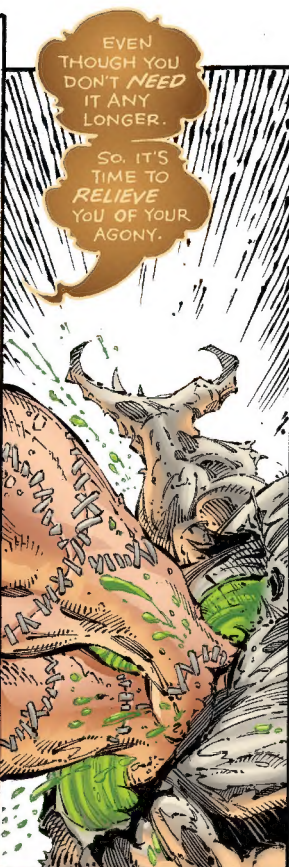
SHE GAVE HER
BODY TO HIM.

IT'S
N-NOT HER
FAULT.

YOU'RE
RIGHT. STILL,
ALL THIS LOVE
HAS LED YOU TO
THIS MOMENT. DO
YOU KNOW WHY?
BECAUSE MALEBOLGIA'S
TOYING WITH YOU--
LETTING YOU BELIEVE
YOU'RE STILL
HUMAN.

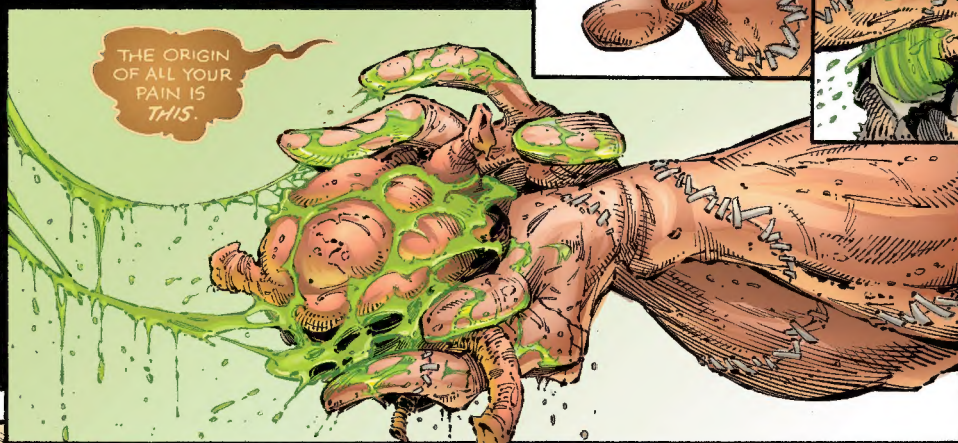


YOU'RE
NOT.
YOU'RE
NECRO-
PLASM NOW.
AS A CRUEL
JOKE, HE LET
YOU KEEP
SOME-
THING.

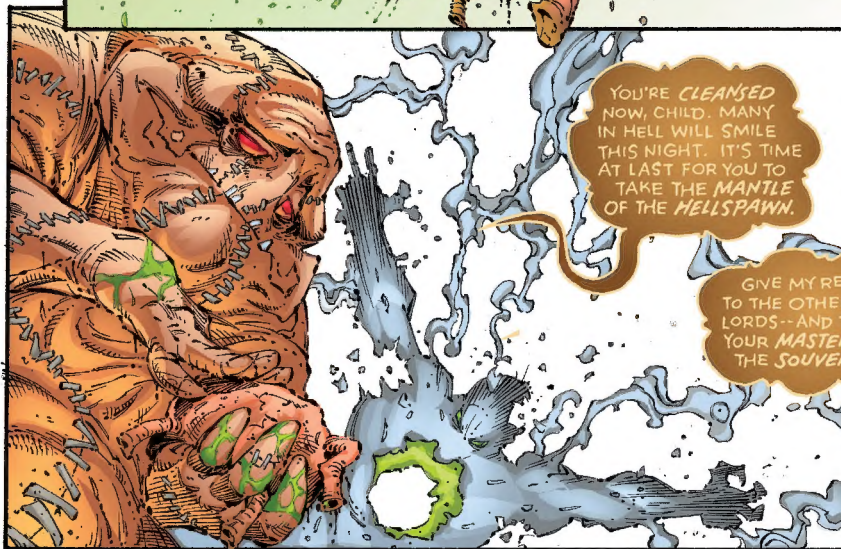


EVEN
THOUGH YOU
DON'T NEED
IT ANY
LONGER.

SO, IT'S
TIME TO
RELIEVE
YOU OF YOUR
AGONY.

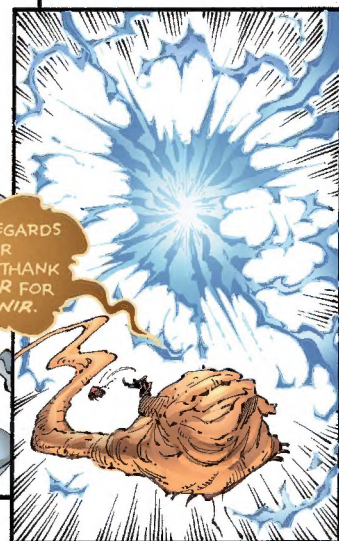


THE ORIGIN
OF ALL YOUR
PAIN IS
THIS.



YOU'RE CLEANSED
NOW, CHILD. MANY
IN HELL WILL SMILE
THIS NIGHT. IT'S TIME
AT LAST FOR YOU TO
TAKE THE MANTLE
OF THE HELLSPAWN.

GIVE MY REGARDS
TO THE OTHER
LORDS--AND THANK
YOUR MASTER FOR
THE SOUVENIR.



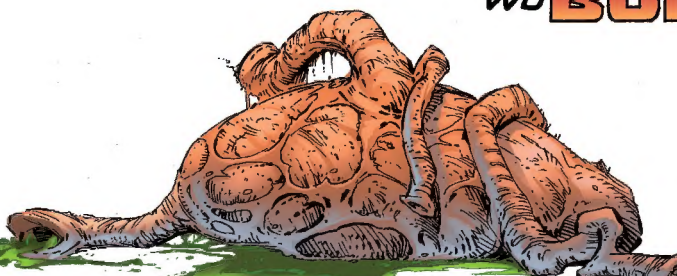
AN INFINITY AWAY,
IN THE BLEAKNESS OF
HELL'S EIGHTH LEVEL,
A KING CACKLES.

Hee Hee
HA HAHAHANA

My warrior's
transformation continues
as expected. His second
incarnation is now complete.
With only a bit more
modification, Simmons
will be ready to take his
place in hell's army
as a General...

... One
devoid
of any
emotion.

WU **BUB**
WU **BUB**
WU **BUB**
WU **BUB**





Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE